589 return for his foster sister's having been allowed to marry out of the family. While this was probably not the reason he remained single, it [158] did at least make it possible. In another case a man was apparently prevented from marrying by a mental illness. Although he died a number of years before we came to the village, we were told that he was slow of mind "and stood shaking his head when you talked to him." [784] This is said to have been his punishment for making fun of the god Chi [776] Yeh who is always represented in festival parades as a short black- [828] faced deity with the habit of continually wagging his head to and fro. The other two cases involved two brothers whose departure from the normal pattern was almost certainly due to poverty. Although this family has lived in Hsiachichou for a number of generations they have [735] never owned any farm land or even a house site. One of their former [87] neighbors told us that even though he was first in his class the present head of the household was forced to quit school after the fourth grade "because the family couldn't afford the few dollars a year for [541] tuition and books." Although the brothers of these two men did manage to marry, it is significant that one of them had to marry matrilocally.

Of a total of 121 women who grew up in Hsiachichou at least 9 (7 percent) and perhaps 11 (9 percent) did not marry by the time they 588 were thirty years of age. One of the doubtful cases involves a woman by the name of Tan A-giok who was in her mid-forties in 1960. According to several of our informants, Tan A-giok's parents arranged for a man to marry into her family, but he didn't stay "because her mother was always saying things to him. He just couldn't stand it, and so he left

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next morning accompanied by her father's elder sister, a tiny, trim old lady dressed in black. Instead of summoning Ng Kui-lian, who should have been present at any negotiations between the two, Chui-ieng informed her husband that she was leaving the family permanently. I cannot imagine what reaction she expected from her husband, but from her subsequent behavior it is clear that she didn't expect what she received. Lim Chieng-cua agreed readily and said he would send someone immediately to summon the police that they might remove her name from the household registration and issue her a new police book. After a stunned silence, Chui-ieng threw all her good sense to the winds and with the biting sarcasm that has cost her so much happiness said, "That will be fine, won't it? You will really be a famous man now." She planted her final taunt with venom. "Yes, everyone will talk about how great the Lim family is now." The aunt, shocked less by her niece's outburst than by the dark red color appearing on Lim Chieng-cua's face, made an attempt to avert what was to come. She shouted at her niece, "Look at his face! You know his health isn't good. It isn't good for his health to get so angry!" But she was too late. In a frenzy, Lim Chieng-cua beat his wife about the head, grabbed her by the hair, and threw her to the cement floor where he punished her brutally with his feet. The aunt was frozen in horror and A-bok and his family were long ago at work in the fields. I had to abandon my anthropological immunity and participate in some direct foreign intervention. Lim Chieng-cua was literally shaking with rage when he left the room—his arms were jerking uncontrollably. The aunt's first statement when her tongue thawed was a typical Taiwanese reaction to someone's physical injury. She began to scold Chui-ieng.

By the time her foster mother arrived that afternoon, Chui-ieng's right eye was swollen closed and her ear and the side of her head were discolored with bruises and clotted blood. As soon as she saw her, the mother began to cry, "It's all my fault. It's all my fault. Oh, to see my daughter like this! Your grandmother and your father said that we shouldn't marry you to a man with such a bad temper, but I wanted this marriage. It is all my fault!"

Chui-ieng replied by begging her mother to take her home. "If I stay here he will kill me. He will kill me, I know it. He said he would kill our daughter." The rest of that day and all of the next a parade of people passed through Chui-ieng's bedroom, and streams of curious

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chapter 12

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A GIFT OF PRIDE

During the years we lived in Peihotien, my husband often turned to Lim Chieng-cua for solutions to the puzzles of village life. We were rarely disappointed by his suggestions. Many of the villagers, and even some of the educated men who are at ease in the classrooms of Taipei, shook their heads at our queries and gave us the thoughtless answer: "That's just the way it is done." Unlike his neighbors, Lim Chieng-cua enjoyed turning our questions over in his mind, often showing us that the error was in the question. We came to rely on his insights to send us down a more fruitful path in our search for understanding. It is not easy for a man who knows no other way of life, and who is a deeply involved participant in the life he knows, to step away from it, and to view it through an outsider's eyes. It is not easy, and it is often not pleasant, but for the Lims this has become a habit. Lim Chieng-cua is not the contemplative oriental so often described and so rarely seen. If he were, he would not have been of so much assistance to us, nor would his opinions have been so respected by his fellows. In the closed life of a Taiwanese village, the unusual quirks of a man's personality are accepted in the same way as a crippled leg: that's just the way he is. But, even the slightest suspicion of a more basic peculiarity—a man who questions the premises his neighbors call fact—leads to doubt and distrust. Because of the long hours he wasted talking with us, some of Lim Chieng-cua's neighbors wondered at his patience, others grew suspicious of his motives and ours, and the

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#159 #596 123 124 828 more acute were uneasy at his obvious enjoyment of profitless discussion. Several times I saw this uneasiness in A-bok's face—a face and perhaps a character more similar to Lim Han-ci's. Thiam-hok's dreamy thoughts and his father's intellectual speculations suggest weakness to the villager. And in a world where each meal can be measured in hours of hard labor, they are a weakness. I hope his neighbors concluded after our departure that the hours Lim Chieng-cua wasted with us were only a modern variation of the hours he wasted in the company of his mistresses.

#159 #596 123 124 I learned as much about the economics of the Lim household and the Lim factory as I could hope to from a rational businessman. I did not, however, learn anything from Lim Chieng-cua about the problems that beset his family. We always talked around them, addressing ourselves to the general problem of why families cannot achieve the ideal to which they all give lip service. My own notions about the tensions that tear apart the extended family, many of them based on simple observation of the Lims, were presented to the head of the Lims and after some thought agreed to by him, but his examples were always in terms of some other family. There was a reserve, often camouflaged by dry humor, that prevented me from being as ruthless with personal questions as I was with other villagers. Lim Chieng-cua held in his mind a clear picture of his family as he wanted us to see it, and even if he thought we might be aware of the flaws in this picture, he was not willing to discuss them. We were to see a thriving, industrious farm family, supplementing its income with a moderately lucrative home factory. Family members all contributed to the common pot and received from the common pot, with final authority resting in the senior male, the head of the household. This was not a simple game of presenting a shining face to the foreigner. We were only bystanders. The more important audience was the village, the larger world of Hotien, and distant but important relatives. It was for many years a deception in which the entire family participated, with varying degrees of willingness. It had not always been a deception.

#159 #596 [369] [291] Lim A-pou's dissatisfaction with the administration of the family budget was more openly expressed during the second year of my stay in the village, and in terms of simple facts, she was often justified in her complaints. She refuses to accept, however, that a man who must obtain custom from city businessmen must dress better than a farmer, that school-age children require more clothes than children rolling